

## Message Text

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TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR

SUBJECT:MBFR: BOSTON GLOBE ARTICLE

1. FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN BOSTON GLOBE OF JUNE 25.

2. BEGIN TEXT: "US MAY OFFER TO REDUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE" BY WILLIAM BEECHER, GLOBE WASHINGTON BUREAU.

WASHINGTON--THE UNITED STATES IS SOUNDING OUT ITS NATO

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ALLIES ON THE POSSIBILITY OF OFFERING TO REMOVE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AMERICAN TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM EUROPE IN RETURN FOR A SOVIET AGREEMENT TO WITHDRAW A 50,000-MAN TANK ARMY.

DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAY THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH HAS PICKED UP RUMORS OF SUCH A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN THE US BARGAINING POSITION, HAS BEEN "STONEWALLING" CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS IN VIENNA UNTIL THE NEW INITIATIVE IS OFFERED. ASSUMING NATO CONCURRENCE WITH THE ESSENTIALS OF THE US PACKAGE, IT COULD BE FORMALLY OFFERED IN THE EARLY FALL.

"THIS WILL REPRESENT A REAL TEST OF SOVIET INTENTIONS," ONE SENIOR US OFFICIAL SAID. "IF THE SOVIETS CONTINUE TO STONEWALL AFTER THIS NEW APPROACH HAS BEEN OFFERED, IT

WILL SHOW CLEARLY THAT THEY HAVE NO GENUINE INTEREST IN MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS. BUT WE'RE HOPING THAT THIS WILL BREAK THE LOGJAM."

SOURCES DECLINED TO GO INTO DETAILS ON THE PROJECTED SIZE OF THE US NUCLEAR WITHDRAWAL, BOTH TO PRESERVE THE OPTION OF ANY CHANGES PROPOSED BY ALLIED NATIONS AND TO PROVIDE SOME MEASURE OF SURPRISE TO THE RUSSIANS.

BUT ONE OFFICIAL SAID THE CONTEMPLATED CUTS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT. HE ADDED: "A FEW HUNDRED WEAPONS WOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANT, WHILE A FEW THOUSAND WOULD CAUSE TRAUMA WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. SO YOU CAN SURMISE THAT THE NUMBER IS SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN."

FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS ON SO-CALLED MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS, KNOWN AS MBFR FOR SHORT. (MEMBER NATIONS OF THE WARSAW TREATY ORGANIZATION - THE WARSAW PACT - ARE THE SOVIET UNION, BULGARIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, EAST GERMANY, HUNGARY, POLAND AND RUMANIA).

BASICALLY, THE NATO POSITION TO DATE HAS BEEN ONE OF OFFERING TO WITHDRAW, IN A PROPOSED FIRST-STEP AGREEMENT, ABOUT 20,000 US CONVENTIONAL GROUND FORCES IN RETURN FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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PULLOUT OF A 50,000-MAN SOVIET TANK ARMY. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO INCREASE STABILITY BY MOVING TOWARD A COMMON CEILING FOR WESTERN AND EASTERN FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

WHILE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON THE CURRENT BALANCE OF FORCES, WESTERN OBSERVERS GENERALLY CREDIT NATO WITH HAVING ABOUT 730,000 TROOPS ALONG THE CENTRAL FRONT, COMPARED TO ABOUT 930,000 WARSAW PACT FORCES.

FOR THEIR PART, THE SOVIET AND WARSAW PACT NEGOTIATOR HAVE STRESSED EQUAL, PHASED 15 PERCENT CUTS BY BOTH SIDES, THE RESULT OF WHICH WOULD BE TO MAINTAIN THE COMMUNIST BLOC'S SUBSTANTIAL NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE. THE RUSSIANS HAVE

URGED THAT REDUCTIONS NOT BE LIMITED TO CONVENTIONAL GROUND TROOPS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, BUT ALSO SHOULD INCLUDE AIR AND TACTICAL NUCLEAR UNITS AND THE FORCES OF WEST GERMANY, AMONG OTHERS.

THE SOVIETS HAVE TAKEN THE POSITION, THAT, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, THERE IS A STABLE MILITARY BALANCE ON THE CENTRAL FRONT AND THAT THEREFORE ALL CUTS SHOULD BE ESSENTIALLY EQUAL. THEY HAVE ARGUED FURTHER THAT REDUCTIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN ALL CATEGORIES OF FORCES AND INVOLVE

ALL THOSE COUNTRIES, EAST AND WEST, ENGAGED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

THE NEW APPROACH BEING DISCUSSED WITH THE NATO ALLIES, SOURCES SAY, IS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF POWER THAT EACH SIDE FEARS MOST.

RUSSIA IS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE 7000 OR SO US TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEPLOYED IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE TACTICAL FIGHTER-BOMBERS AND MISSILES CAPABLE OF DELIVERING MANY OF THEM.

FOR ITS PART, NATO IS PARTICULARLY WORRIED ABOUT THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS' ADVANTAGES BOTH IN MANPOWER AND MORE PARTICULARLY IN TANKS-ABOUT 16,000 VS. 7000.

THE AMERICAN PROPOSAL, PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITH THE UNCLASSIFIED

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BRITISH AND GERMAN GOVERNMENTS AND NOW BEING TAKEN UP WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE, WOULD REMOVE NOT ONLY NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT SYSTEMS USED TO DELIVER THEM, INCLUDING WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS A MODEST NUMBER OF F4 FIGHTER-BOMBERS AND PERSHING MISSILES. AIR AND GROUND TROOPS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE WEAPONS ALSO WOULD BE INVOLVED, OFFICIALS SAID.

WHETHER THE AMERICAN PLAN WILL UNDERGO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. SOME NATO NATIONS IN THE PAST, ESPECIALLY WEST GERMANY, HAVE STOUTLY OPPOSED CUTS IN AMERICAN NUCLEAR FORCES FOR FEAR THIS MIGHT SOMEHOW UNDERMINE DETERRENCE BY SEEMING TO PUT IN QUESTION AMERICA'S CONTINUED WILLINGNESS TO RESORT TO NUCLEAR RETALIATION IN FACE OF AN OVERWHELMING CONVENTIONAL ASSAULT BY THE WARSAW PACT FORCES.

SOME US PLANNERS COUNTER THIS BY POINTING OUT THAT EVEN AFTER A CUTBACK, APPROXIMATELY 6000 NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEPLOYED FORWARD WOULD STILL REPRESENT A FORMIDABLE DETERRENT. AND THIS WOULD BE BACKED BY THE LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC MISSILES AND BOMBERS IN THE AMERICAN ARSENAL.

IN ADDITION, THEY SAY A REMOVAL OF SOME NUCLEAR-CAPABLE AIRCRAFT PARADOXICALLY MIGHT INCREASE THE ABILITY OF THE WEST TO EMPLOY CERTAIN NUCLEAR WEAPONS SINCE SUCH FIGHTER-BOMBER" WOULD BE TAKEN OUT OF RANGE OF ANY CONVENTIONAL FIRST STRIKE AND COULD BE REINTRODUCED TO THE THEATER WITHIN 24 HOURS.

NO ONE, HOWEVER, WOULD CARRY THIS ARGUMENT TO THE CONCLUSION THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY FAVOR: THAT ALL NUCLEAR-CAPABLE AIRCRAFT BE WITHDRAWN. A MAJOR MISSION OF PLANES SUCH AS THE F4 WOULD BE TO FIRE PRECISION-GUIDED CONVENTIONAL MUNITIONS AGAINST SOVIET TANKS IN THE EVENT OF WAR.

AMONG THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS IMPELLING THE UNITED STATES TO TRY TO ACHIEVE MEANINGFUL REDUCTIONS -- OR MORE PRECISELY WITHDRAWALS -- OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT FORCES DEPLOYED IN CENTRAL EUROPE WOULD BE TO: REDUCE THE CHANCES OF WAR, PLANNED OR ACCIDENTAL; DIMINISH THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SPECTER OF AN INCREASINGLY POWERFUL SOVIET UNION USING ITS LARGE FORWARD-DEPLOYED FORCES TO EXACT POLITICAL CONCESSIONS FROM WEAKER WEST EUROPEAN STATES; CUT BACK TO AN EXTENT ON DEFENSE COSTS; AND LESSEN THE ARDOR OF THOSE IN CONGRESS PRESSING FOR LARGE UNILATERAL TROOP CUTS.

OFFICIALS AGREE THAT SHOULD THE ESSENCE OF THE AMERICAN NEGOTIATING PACKAGE BE ACCEPTED BY THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS, ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT SINGLE ISSUES WOULD INVOLVE THE QUESTION OF HOW TO VERIFY THAT BOTH SIDES ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT PLANNED WITHDRAWALS AND COULD NOT REINTRODUCE SUCH FORCES WITHOUT IT BEING QUICKLY APPARENT.

OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS CONSIDERABLE RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER SOMETHING AS LARGE AS A TANK ARMY, WITH 50,000 TROOPS AND 1500-2000 TANKS, HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN.

BUT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY IF THE RUSSIANS PRACTICED DECEPTION, TO TELL PRECISELY WHEN SUCH A FORCE BEGAN TO MOVE BACK FROM ONLY ABOUT 100 MILES OR SO BEHIND THE FRONT.

ONE IDEA THAT WESTERN OFFICIALS FIND INTERESTING WOULD BE TO POST HUMAN MONITORS AT KEY RAIL AND ROAD HUBS THROUGH WHICH A TANK ARMY WOULD HAVE TO PASS TO RETURN TO THE COMBAT THEATER.

SUCH ON-SITE INSPECTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN ANATHEMA TO THE SOVIET UNION, BUT DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAY SOMETHING OF

THAT SORT WOULD BE A PREREQUISITE TO A MEANINGFUL AGREEMENT  
THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS, SIMILARLY, WOULD BE OFFERED MON-  
ITORING SITES AT KEY POINTS IN NATO TERRITORY.

BUT US OFFICIALS ARE DETERMINED NOT TO INCLUDE RE-  
DUCTIONS IN THE GERMAN ARMY, THE BUNDESWEHR, IN ANY FIRST-

STEP AGREEMENT.

"WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN TRADING OFF THE BUNDESWEHR  
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FOR THE POLISH MARINES," ONE OFFICIAL SAID. END TEXT.

3. WE ARE USING THE FOLLOWING CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE  
HERE: "THERE ARE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS IN NATO ON ALL  
ASPECTS OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS INAPPROPRIATE  
TO COMMENT ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS OR  
ALLIED CONSULTATIONS. ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THESE  
SUBJECTS IS A MATTER FOR PRIOR AGREEMENT WITH THE PARTIES  
CONCERNED. THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL." KISSINGER

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